

2009: 75 years of the Netherlands Society of Cardiology

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The Netherlands Society of Cardiology (NVVC) was founded on 28 April 1934 on the occasion of the 70th birthday of Professor Karel Frederik Wenckebach. The first record of our Society can be derived from *Het Nederlands Tijdschrift voor Geneeskunde (NTVG)* 78.III.29, 21 July 1934:3393-3395.

Professor W.A. Kuenen (Leiden) became the first President of our Society and at the same time Wenckebach (Vienna) was appointed Honorary President of the NVVC. In 1934, the NVVC was defined as follows: The Society is purely scientific, every physician or veterinary surgeon with an interest in cardiology may apply for candidate-membership to the secretary's office. The annual contribution will amount to 5 Dutch guilders.

The first NVVC meetings were held on Sundays (!) and the very first Society Report was based on the NVVC meeting at the University Hospital of Leiden on 31 October 1936. The late Professor Herman Snellen (Leiden) presented his preliminary observations on intracardiac calcifications post-mortem and in vivo (NTVG 81.IV.50, 11 December 1937:5972-5981).

Pioneers of the first hour of our Society were Wenckebach, Kuenen, De Haas, Van Mervence, Enthoven, Van Nieuwenhuizen, Snellen, Magnus, Lamers, Weisfelt, Van Muyden, Formyne, Lionarons, Polak, Van Buchem, and Van Ruyven. From then on, regular meetings were held at various places in the Netherlands (Amsterdam, Utrecht, The Hague, Leiden) and also in Brussels together with the Belgian Society of Cardiology in 1938.

NVVC activities went on until 1941 when the Second World War intervened. The last NVVC report during WO II dates from 25 October 1941 (Leiden, President Kuenen). After the war, the activities of the NVVC were first resumed in December 1946 (Utrecht, President Van Ruyven).

To the best of our knowledge, the first official statutes of the NVVC date back to 1951 when Professor Formyne was President. The goals of the NVVC at that time were twofold: 1) to promote the knowledge of cardiovascular diseases, and to take measures for fighting cardiovascular diseases and its consequences, 2) to serve the professional interests of Dutch cardiologists. In 1949, cardiology was recognised as an independent profession by the Registration Committee for Specialists (currently MSRC). Professor Snellen (Leiden) was the first representative of our profession within the MSRC. Our cardiology training programme initially consisted of a five-year period, including three years of internal medicine and two years of cardiology. In the 1980s it was decided that our training period would be expanded to a total of six years, consisting of two years internal medicine and four years cardiology.

Our 30th anniversary in 1964 was a very memorable year as two prominent members of our Society, the Professors Snellen and Van Nieuwenhuizen (Nieuwegein), decided to found the Netherlands Heart Foundation (NHS). The NHS developed into a powerful institute with its main emphasis on prevention, patient information and funding scientific projects. In 1994, the Netherlands Institute for Continuing Cardiovascular Education (CVOI) was established with the main goal to provide education to fellows in training and to cardiologists. The CVOI has proved to be indispensable in educating members of the NVVC and beyond. Certain major achievements have been made during the past 75 years. First of all, since the early 1990s our biannual NVVC congresses have become well-attended meetings creating a true scientific and social platform for all our members. Second, our Website has matured and has become the

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Figure 1. Celebration of the 50th anniversary of the NVVC in Sonesta Koepel Hotel, Amsterdam, 1984.

optimal place to act as a porte-parole for NVVC members. Next, since 2001 we have our own monthly Society Journal bearing the name the *Netherlands Heart Journal*. The Journal was included in PubMed in 2006 and has been indexed in the Web of Science since 2008. In recent years, our Society has developed from a purely scientific organ to an outstanding professional institute serving a complete spectrum from scientific developments, training and education, generation of guidelines, quality assessment, development of registries, to professional and political interests. Most of these issues are dealt with by our very professional office (Bureau NVVC), taking care of the needs and demands of the members. Many committees and working groups are very active within our Society. Our Society currently contains almost 1500 members and the organisational level of our Society is close to 100%! As a national society we are closely related to our mother

society, the European Society of Cardiology (ESC). At present, our Society is flourishing as never before!

Understandably, we have no recollections of the 10th anniversary of the NVVC (1944) due to the Second World War; neither are there any mementos of the 20th anniversary in 1954. Fortunately, there are still many memorabilia left from the 30th, 40th, 50th, and 60th anniversaries of the NVVC. All our anniversaries have been celebrated in hotels in Amsterdam: 1974 (Hilton), 1984 (Sonesta, figure 1), 1994 (Barbizon Palace) and 2004 (Okura). Also the 75th year will be celebrated in Amsterdam (Mövenpick). For our 75th anniversary we can look back on outstanding achievements by eminent Dutch cardiologists, reason why we proudly selected the theme 'Made in Holland'. We wholeheartedly welcome you to attend our 15th lustrum! ■